

## **Amendments to the Specification**

Please insert the following paragraph at the beginning of page 1.

### **PRIOR APPLICATION**

This application is a divisional application from prior application SN 10/094,108 filed May 8, 2002.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 22 with the following rewritten paragraph.

In general, deuterium may diffuse in any direction, including vertical and lateral diffusion. As such, deuterium atoms residing in nitride layer 36 prior to the reflow process may diffuse into dielectric layer 38, semiconductor layer 12 including source and drain regions 26, and SONOS structure 28 including silicon layer 22, ONO dielectric 20, and sidewall spacers 24. Similarly, deuterium atoms residing in nitride layer 16 and/or sidewall spacers 24 prior to the reflow process may diffuse into surrounding elements of semiconductor topography 10. Without being bound to theory, it is believed that introduction of deuterium during such a reflow process may serve to migrate, occupy and substantially neutralize many of the trap sites located in the oxide-silicon interfaces of SONOS structure 28. In other words, the introduction of deuterium within oxide-silicon interfaces 42 and 48 of SONOS structure 28 may passivate the dangling bonds existing within such interfaces. Consequently, the endurance and retention of a device containing SONOS structure 28 may be improved. In particular, the retention of a device containing a SONOS structure with dangling bonds passivated with deuterium may be extended between approximately 50% and approximately 150% as compared to a device containing a SONOS structure with dangling bond passivated with hydrogen. Larger or smaller extensions, however, may be obtained depending on the device being tested and the testing parameters.